Remarks

Reconsideration of the Final Office Action, dated 8/25/2005, is respectfully requested in light of the Amendment to the Claims filed with the present RCE.

I. Simultaneous Search.

Claims 1 and 12 are amended to recite that a search inquiry placed at a first server is simultaneously forwarded to other servers having the same protocols established by the first server, so that the search inquiry is simultaneously performed at all the servers.

The claimed design reveals on Page 14, Lines 3-7 that "*a search inquiry placed at one particular web card server may be passed **simultaneously**, through the interface of the protocols, to all remote web card servers that have the established protocols with the particular web card server. The search can then be done **simultaneously** at all remote web card servers.*" (***Emphasis*** added). Applicant respectfully notes that the Dickinson's design fails to disclose the amended simultaneousness features.

Such simultaneous and concurrent performance is clearly not disclosed, or suggested, by Dickson. The Dickinson's design teaches on column 8, Lines 7-27 that the card information can be retrieved from other computers when it is not available at the local computer, as cited by the Examiner. That is, when a search inquiry is entered to the Dickinson's system, search is initially made on the local workstation (server) where the retrieval is sought. If the information for retrieval exists upon the local workstation (server), the corresponding business card information is transferred to the application that sought to retrieve the information and the search process then completes. When and only when the information selected for retrieval does not exist upon the workstation (server) where the retrieval is sought (i.e., it is not available at the local computer), the inquiry is forwarded to other computers (e.g., the publishing host), which are then searched for the information to be retrieved. Thus, the search inquiry is not be performed simultaneously or concurrently both at the local workstation and at all the remote workstations in the Dickinson's design.

As previously emphasized, the claimed invention has numerous advantages over

the Dickinson art. As stated in the BACKGROUND of the subject application (Page 2, Line 13-Page 3, Line 10), the claimed network of systems is intended to perform an "**approximate**" or "**imperfect**" search in the absence of the "perfect" contact information. For example, if a searcher desires to get the business card information of persons with the family name, *Smith*, the claimed invention will simultaneously conduct the search at all the web servers including the master server (3721™ server), the local web servers owned by other ISPs/ICPs and the local web servers within the intranets of multiple companies. Then the master server(s) collects all the search results (all persons named *Smith* who registered his business card with one server located in the network) from respective slave web servers and/or the master server(s) itself (themselves) and delivers the collected results to the searcher.

To the contrary, within the Dickinson's design, if one or more persons named *Smith* are found at the local server where the retrieval is sought, their card information will be transferred as the search result to the searcher and the search process terminates with the other remote servers left un-searched. Only when no person named *Smith* or no information for retrieval is found at the local server, would the other remote web servers be searched. Thus, for the Dickinson's design, only some of persons who match the search inquiry are presented to the searcher. It may be appreciated that the Dickinson's design is more suitable for performing an "**accurate**" search, because the search process terminates when an accurately matched business card is found at some server.

For the above reasons, the Dickinson reference fails to anticipate the amended Independent claims 1 and 12 as well as their dependent claims thereof under 35 USC Sec. 102(b).

II. Pre-assigned Master Server.

Claims 2, 3, 11, 13, 14, 18, 19 are amended to recite the "pre-assigned" master server which maintains control throughout the operation. Compared to Dickson's dynamic master/slave relationship, the pre-assigned Master server of the claimed invention remains as the master in its network. It is comparable to a "hub-and-spoke" arrangement, where the master server remains as the "hub" of the network or its assigned group and other servers are the "spoke."

Applicant notes that in the Dickinson's design, each of the computers within the system is able to serve as a master server and a slave server at the same time. This is a dynamic relation, different from the pre-assignment of the claimed invention. A workstation could be a master server relative to the business card it initiates, but would become a slave server relative to the replicated or duplicated business cards stored thereon. In other words, there does not exist one static pre-assigned master server that functions as 3721™ Master Web Server 21 in Figure 2 or the master web server 100 in Figure 6A of the present design.

Further, the claimed invention describes, on Page 7, Lines 15-17, that "*the global card search may be coordinated by the master card server, such as 3721™ server 11. The master server may coordinate the propagation of data synchronization of any updates between the slave servers.*" Also the claimed invention describes, on Page 16, Lines 11-14, that "*in the centrally controlled network of systems of web cards, the master web card server 100 is in charge of transmitting all search inquiries, and passing the updates. Thus, each of other web card servers 101 may establish only one protocol with the master web card server 100.*" The master server herein refers to a server that centrally controls the whole network of systems (i.e., controls all the slave servers). The claimed master server may contain a global card exchange center, and all of the updates or data of the slave servers may be transmitted to the master server for passing on to another or other desired slave services for synchronization of these updates therewith.

The present invention's pre-assignment of the master server is static, vis-à-vis Dickson's dynamic assignment. Even when a user conducts a search at a slave server, the search will not only be performed by the local search engine of the particular slave server, but also be passed onto the master card search engine. The pre-assigned, e.g. 3721™ Master Web Server, master server simultaneously transmits all search inquires to all the other slave servers to retrieve the inquired information and then collect the search results for delivery to the user.

For the above reasons, Dickinson fails to anticipate the amended Independent Claims 2 and 18 as well as the dependent claims thereof under 35 USC Sec. 102(b).

Conclusion.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as defined in the amended claims is novel over the Dickinson's design, and further cannot be obvious in view of Dickinson. It is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn and the claims allowed in due course.

The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney to discuss any matter relating to the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the US Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class mail in an envelop addressed to: MS RCE, Commissioner for Patents, PO Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this date: 1-25-, 2006

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